

Regular Meeting of County Commissioners
Tuesday October 8, 2024 (Legislative Day)

The regularly scheduled meeting of the County Commissioners was convened in person and virtually, at 9:00 a.m. with the following persons in attendance:

Reuben B. Collins II, Esq., President, County Commissioner
Gilbert O. Bowling, III, County Commissioner
Thomasina O. Coates, M.S., County Commissioner
Amanda M. Stewart, Ed.D., County Commissioner
Deborah Hall, Acting County Administrator
Wes Adams, County Attorney
Carol A. DeSoto, Clerk to the Commissioners

**Ralph Patterson, II, M.A., Vice President, County Commissioner was absent and joined session later this day as noted.*

Call to Order/Pledge

Commissioner Collins called the meeting to order and began with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Roll Call

A roll call was taken. Commissioners Bowling, Coates, and Collins were present in person. Commissioner Stewart was present virtually.

**Commissioner Patterson was absent.*

Commissioners' Comments

Commissioner Bowling stressed the need for respectful comments related to the Charter vote. He also clarified that it is the Board of five (5) Commissioners that make the policy decisions and not an unelected professional. Even if the Commissioners do not agree they do their best.

A motion was made by Commissioner Bowling, seconded by Commissioner Coates and passed, with Commissioners Bowling, Coates, Stewart and Collins present, voting in favor to make today, October 8, 2024 a Legislative Day. **Commissioner Patterson was not present for the vote.*

Approval of the Minutes of October 1, 2024

A motion was made by Commissioner Bowling, seconded by Commissioner Coates and passed, with Commissioners Bowling, Coates, Stewart and Collins present, voting in favor to approve the minutes of October 1, 2024. **Commissioner Patterson was not present for the vote.*

Announcement

Next Scheduled Session(s): October 22-23, 2024.

Approval Items

Budget Amendments and Budget Transfers

(Mr. Jacob Dyer, Acting Director, Department of Fiscal and Administrative; Ms. Dina Barclay, Director, and Ms. Laura Gustafson, Deputy Director, Department of Community Services)

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FY2025 Budget Amendment Increase #536 Use of Fund Balance recreation Senior Center Program to Recreation Fund Aging Nutrition Program

A motion was made by Commissioner Bowling, seconded by Commissioner Coates and passed, with Commissioners Bowling, Coates, Stewart and Collins present, voting in favor to approve FY2025 Budget Amendment Increase #536 for three hundred and six thousand two hundred and twenty dollars (\$306,220.00). **Commissioner Patterson was not present for the vote.*

Lease Agreement: Blue Crabs Stadium

(Ms. Jenifer Ellin, Acting Deputy County Administrator, Office of the County Administrator)

A motion was made by Commissioner Bowling, seconded by Commissioner Coates and passed, with Commissioners Bowling, Coates, Stewart and Collins present, voting in favor to approve this lease agreement. **Commissioner Patterson was not present for the vote.*

Approval of Additional Public Hearing Date for Proposed Bill 2024-(06) Zoning Text Amendment (ZTA) 22-174 Mixed Use (MX) Zone (work session held on October 1, 2024)

A motion was made by Commissioner Bowling, seconded by Commissioner Coates and passed, with Commissioners Bowling, Coates, Stewart and Collins present, voting in favor to schedule the public hearing on Wednesday, October 30, 2024 at 6pm in the Government Building at 200 Baltimore Street, La Plata, MD to be held hybrid, in-person and virtually. **Commissioner Patterson was not present for the vote.*

Discussion: Revising Commissioner Public Comment Sessions to Allow Commissioner Feedback

(Ms. Jennifer Harris, Chief of Media Services, Office of the County Administrator; Ms. Renesha Miles, Chief Equity Officer, Department of Human Resources)

The Commissioners directed staff to bring back options on how to proceed adding Commissioners' ability to respond after public comments including parameters and a policy. This discussion will be held on December 3, 2024.

Annual Update: Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) 2024

Mr. Johnny Olszewski, President, and Mr. Michael Sanderson, Executive Director, Maryland Association of Counties (MACo), joined the Commissioners to provide an annual update on the state of counties in Maryland and a brief overview of MACo's legislative work on the State budget policy in the 2024 General Assembly. They also discussed Bills passed related to housing, transit-oriented areas, pressures for clean energy (solar); cannabis laws, and public financing related to the Education Blueprint.

Briefing and Request to Schedule a Public Hearing: FY2025 Municipal Storm Water (MS4) Financial Assurance Plan (FAP)

Mr. Charles Rice, Planning Director and Ms. Karen Wiggen, Planner III, Department of Planning and Growth Management reviewed the Financial Assurance Plan (FAP), Watershed Protection and Restoration Program which applies to Maryland jurisdictions with Phase I municipal stormwater discharge permits (MS4). Charles County approves the FAPs every two (2) years since 2017. Ms. Wiggen reviewed what the FAP must identify, restoration types, and the FAP tables annual practices, restoration completed, restoration planned, and impervious surface restoration expenses and revenues.

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The total requirement is one thousand eighty-three (1083) acres. Since 2020 to present fifty one percent (51%) impervious surface restoration has been completed and the County is on track to achieve the one thousand eighty-three (1083) acres by 2027.

A motion was made by Commissioner Bowling, seconded by Commissioner Coates and passed, with Commissioners Bowling, Coates, Stewart and Collins present, voting in favor to schedule the public hearing on Tuesday, November 19, 2024 at 6pm in the Government Building at 200 Baltimore Street, La Plata, MD to be held hybrid, in-person and virtually **Commissioner Patterson was not present for the vote*

Briefing and Request to Introduce and Schedule a Public Hearing: Proposed Bill 2024-(14) Revisions to the Homeowners Tax Credit

Mr. Eric Jackson, Chief of Treasury, Department of Fiscal and Administrative Services reviewed the proposed Bill. He explained that in 2021, the homeowner's income criteria in State Homeowners' Property Tax Program increased. The combined household income was adjusted to not exceed sixty thousand dollars (\$60,000.00). Staff is requesting that County Code be amended so that the combined household income always matches the State program. This will allow for more senior homeowners to be eligible for this tax credit

A motion was made by Commissioner Coates, seconded by Commissioner Bowling and passed, with Commissioners Bowling, Coates, Stewart and Collins present, voting in favor to introduce proposed Bill 2024-14 Revisions to the Homeowners Tax Credit. **Commissioner Patterson was not present for the vote.*

A motion was made by Commissioner Coates, seconded by Commissioner Bowling and passed, with Commissioners Bowling, Coates, Stewart and Collins present, voting in favor to schedule the public hearing on Tuesday, November 19, 2024 at 6pm in the Government Building at 200 Baltimore Street, La Plata, MD to be held hybrid, in-person and virtually **Commissioner Patterson was not present for the vote.*

Briefing: Charles County Engagement Platform

Ms. Kayla Hunt, Communications Coordinator, Ms. Doria Fleisher, Community Engagement Coordinator, and Ms. Jennifer Harris, Chief of Media Services, Office of the County Administrator Media Services Division, reviewed Charles County's tools used to build engagement and strengthen communication. The tools used are for News and Information, Emergency Messaging, social media, Video/Audio, Community Engagement, and Online Engagement. The new platform is "Stay Engaged, Charles County." The Media division follows the International Association of Public Participation (IAP2) to increase the level of public impact.

**At about 10:41 a.m. Commissioner Stewart joined session in person.*

Closed Session

At 11:01 a.m., a motion was made by Commissioner Bowling, seconded by Commissioner Coates and passed, with Commissioners Bowling, Coates, Stewart, and Collins present, voting in favor to move into Close Session where all or a portion of this session may be closed pursuant to Section 3-305 (b)(7)(8) of the General Provisions Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland to discuss a litigation

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matter. The reason for moving into closed session is to keep legal advice, negotiations, strategies, and personnel information confidential. **Commissioner Patterson was not present for the vote.*

Summary Closed Session Items

At about 11:11 a.m., the Commissioners went into closed session.

3-305(b)(7)(8) Update Litigation Matter

Present: Commissioners Bowling, Coates, Stewart, and Collins, Wes Adams, Carol DeSoto, Deborah Hall, Jenifer Ellin, and Elizabeth Theobalds.

Mr. Wes Adams, County Attorney, and Ms. Elizabeth Theobalds, Deputy County Attorney, Office of the County Attorney for Charles County, reviewed the court order related to this issue and outlined the next steps that the County needs to take.

At 11:29 a.m., a motion was made by Commissioner Bowling, seconded by Commissioner Coates and passed, with Commissioners Bowling, Coates, Stewart, and Collins present, voting in favor to end this close session. **Commissioner Patterson was not present for the vote.*

Animal Care Groundbreaking Event (5690 Piney Church Road, Waldorf, MD 20602)

At about 4:27 p.m. the Commissioners returned to open session.

Roll Call

A roll call was taken. All Commissioners were present. Commissioners Bowling, Coates, Stewart and Collins were in person. Commissioner Patterson was virtual.

**At about 4:37 p.m. Commissioner Patterson joined session in person.*

Charles County Departmental Highlights Departmental Highlights: Department of Human Resources Department of Emergency Services Department of Fiscal and Administrative Services Department of Economic Development

Ms. Alexis Blackwell, Director, Department of Human Resources; Ms. Michelle Lilly, Director, Department of Emergency Services; Mr. Jacob Dyer, Acting Director, Department of Fiscal and Administrative Services; and Ms. Kelly Robertson-Slagle, Director, Department of Economic Development, joined the Commissioners to provide a presentation outlining some of their department highlights and activities.

Briefing: Update on Charles County Water Supply Program and Status

Ms. Alicia Afroilan, Engineering Supervisor, Mr. Andrew Balchin, Chief of Infrastructure Management, Mr. Fahad Hassan, and Mr. Jason Groth, Acting Director, Department of Planning and Growth Management; and Mr. Christopher Ramo, Senior Associate, Hazen and Sawyer, provided an update on the water supply program. Mr. Ramos reviewed the water supply program history, purpose and need, timeline and planning efforts, and recommended program. The program was established to provide long-term water supply reliability for the Waldorf and Bryan's Road systems and

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accommodate a projected growth in water demand. The short-term effort to build an interconnection pipeline along Route 301 to connect the Waldorf system to the Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission is projected to come online by 2027. The timeline for a long-term solution to establish a new intake and water treatment plant along the Upper Potomac River was also discussed.

Commissioners' New Business

Commissioner Stewart thanked staff for the all the work related to the Animal Care Center.

At 5:32 p.m., a motion was made by Commissioner Bowling, seconded by Commissioner Stewart and passed, with all Commissioners present, voting in favor to adjourn.

Carol A. DeSoto, Clerk to the Commissioners

Reuben B. Collins, II, Esq., President